Physical Therapist Assistant National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE) Test Content Outline

*This test is designed to measure whether or not an examinee has the requisite knowledge required of entry-level physical therapist assistants working under the supervision of a physical therapist. The focus is on the **clinical application** of knowledge, concepts and principles necessary for the provision of **safe and effective patient care** consistent with the principles of best practice.*

	# Items	Cardiac, Vascular, & Pulmonary Systems (12.67%)	Musculo-skeletal System (21.33%)	Neuro-muscular & Nervous Systems (20%)	Integu-mentary (6%)	Other Systems (12.67%)		
						Metabolic & Endocrine	Gastro-intestinal	Multi-System
Clinical Application of Physical Therapy Principles and Foundational Sciences (39.33%)	**59**	10	15	14	4	3	2	11
Data Collection (15.33%)	**23**	4	9	7	2	1	0	0
Interventions (18.00%)	**27**	5	8	9	3	2	0	0
		19	**32**	**30**	**9**	**19**		
Equipment & Devices; Therapeutic Modalities (14.67%)	**22**							
Equipment & Devices	9							
Therapeutic Modalities	13							
Safety & Professional Roles; Teaching/Learning; Evidence-Based Practice (12.67%)	**19**							
Safety, Protection, & Professional Roles	12							
Teaching & Learning	4							
Evidence-Based Practice	3							
Total	**150**							

Note that this blueprint covers important entry-level knowledge areas that are reasonably tested using well-constructed multiple-choice questions; some important areas are excluded because they cannot be adequately assessed in a multiple-choice format or are situation-specific. Feedback on candidates' performance will be provided for each knowledge area shown in boldface type. The information in gray type reflects relative weights within knowledge areas.

Cardiac, Vascular, & Pulmonary Systems

Clinical Application of Physical Therapy Principles and Foundational Sciences: This category refers to the essential scientific principles, pathologies, diseases and conditions that serve as the foundation for understanding the involvement of the cardiac, vascular, and pulmonary systems in the treatment of patients/clients across the lifespan.

- Anatomy, physiology, and pathophysiology of the cardiac, vascular, and pulmonary systems
- Anatomy, physiology, and pathophysiology of the lymphatic system
- Diseases/conditions of the cardiac, vascular, and pulmonary systems
- Diseases/conditions of the lymphatic system
- Diseases or conditions of cardiac, vascular, and pulmonary systems in order to provide effective treatments
- Diseases or conditions of the lymphatic system in order to provide effective treatments
- Medical management of the cardiac, vascular, and pulmonary systems (e.g., medical tests, medications, surgical procedures)
- Physiological response to environmental factors and characteristics (e.g., air temperature, humidity, water temperature, water depth, buoyancy, altitude)
- Effects of activity and exercise on the cardiovascular/pulmonary system (including the physiological response of the cardiovascular/pulmonary system to various types of test/measures and interventions)

Data Collection: This category refers to awareness of the types and applications of cardiac, vascular, and pulmonary systems tests and measures. The category includes the reaction of the cardiac, vascular, and pulmonary systems to tests and measures, and the mechanics of body movement as related to the cardiac, vascular, and pulmonary systems. Information covered in these areas supports appropriate and effective patient/client management across the lifespan.

- Appropriate types of cardiovascular/pulmonary system tests/measures and their applications (e.g., measuring blood pressure, heartrate)
- Movement analysis as related to the cardiovascular/pulmonary system (e.g., rib cage excursion)

Interventions: This category refers to the cardiac, vascular, and pulmonary systems interventions (including types, applications, responses, and potential complications) as well as the impact on the cardiac, vascular, and pulmonary systems of interventions performed on other systems in order to support patient/client management across the lifespan.

- Appropriate types of cardiovascular/pulmonary system interventions and their applications
- Secondary effects or complications from interventions on cardiovascular/pulmonary system
- Secondary effects or complications on cardiovascular/pulmonary system from interventions used on other systems

Musculoskeletal System

Clinical Application of Physical Therapy Principles and Foundational Sciences: This category refers to the essential scientific principles, pathologies, diseases and conditions that serve as the foundation for understanding musculoskeletal system involvement in the treatment of patients/clients across the lifespan.

- Anatomy, physiology, and pathophysiology of the muscular and skeletal systems
- Diseases/conditions of the muscular and skeletal systems
- Diseases/conditions of the connective tissue
- Diseases or conditions of the muscular and skeletal systems in order to provide effective treatments
- Diseases or conditions of the connective tissue in order to provide effective treatments
- Medical management of the musculoskeletal system (e.g., medical tests, medications, surgical procedures)
- Physiological response to environmental factors and characteristics (e.g., air temperature, humidity, water temperature, water depth, buoyancy, altitude)
- Effects of activity and exercise on the musculoskeletal system
- Joint structure
- Joint functionality and mobility

Data Collection: This category refers to the types and applications of musculoskeletal system tests and measures. The category also includes the reaction of the musculoskeletal system to tests and measures, and the mechanics of body movement as related to the musculoskeletal system. Information covered in these areas supports appropriate and effective patient/client management across the lifespan.

- Appropriate types of musculoskeletal system tests/measures and their applications (e.g., manual muscle testing, isokinetic testing)
- Physiological response of the musculoskeletal system to various types of tests/measures
- Movement analysis including application of kinesiology/kinematics as related to the musculoskeletal system (e.g., observation of gait)

Interventions: This category refers to the features (e.g., types, applications, responses, and potential complications) of musculoskeletal system interventions as well as the impact on the musculoskeletal system of interventions performed on other systems in order to support patient/client management across the lifespan.

- Appropriate types of musculoskeletal system interventions and their applications
- Physiological response of the musculoskeletal system to various types of interventions
- Secondary effects or complications from interventions on musculoskeletal system
- Secondary effects or complications on musculoskeletal system from interventions used on other systems

Neuromuscular & Nervous Systems

Clinical Application of Physical Therapy Principles and Foundational Sciences: This category refers to the essential scientific principles, pathologies, diseases and conditions that serve as the foundation for understanding neuromuscular/nervous system involvement in the treatment of patients/clients across the lifespan.

- Anatomy, physiology, and pathophysiology of the neuromuscular system
- Anatomy, physiology, and pathophysiology of the nervous system (CNS, PNS, ANS)
- Diseases/conditions of the nervous system (CNS, PNS, ANS)
- Diseases or conditions of the nervous system (CNS, PNS, ANS) in order to provide effective treatments
- Medical management of the neuromuscular/nervous system (e.g., medical tests, medications, surgical procedures)
- Physiological response to environmental factors and characteristics (e.g., air temperature, humidity, water temperature, water depth, buoyancy, altitude)
- Effects of activity and exercise as related to the neuromuscular/nervous system
- Motor control as related to the neuromuscular/nervous system
- Motor learning as related to the neuromuscular/nervous system
- Neurological functioning (e.g., cognition, affect, arousal, memory)

Data Collection: This category refers to awareness of the types and applications of neuromuscular/nervous system tests and measures. The category also includes the reaction of the neuromuscular/nervous system to tests and measures, and the mechanics of body movement as related to the neuromuscular/nervous system. Information covered in these areas supports appropriate and effective patient/client management across the lifespan.

- Appropriate types of neuromuscular/nervous system data collection techniques and their applications (e.g., tests of deep and superficial sensation)
- Physiological response of the neuromuscular/nervous system to various types of test/measures
- Movement analysis including application of kinesiology/kinematics as related to the neuromuscular/nervous system (e.g., observation of gait, balance)

Interventions: This category refers to the features (e.g., types, applications, responses, and potential complications) of neuromuscular/nervous system interventions as well as the impact on the neuromuscular/nervous system of interventions performed on other systems in order to support patient/client management across the lifespan.

- Appropriate types of neuromuscular/nervous system interventions and their applications
- Physiological response of the neuromuscular/nervous system to various types of interventions
- Secondary effects or complications from interventions on neuromuscular/nervous system
- Secondary effects or complications on neuromuscular/nervous system from interventions used on other systems
- Motor control as related to neuromuscular/nervous system interventions
- Motor learning as related to neuromuscular/nervous system interventions

Integumentary System

Clinical Application of Physical Therapy Principles and Foundational Sciences: This category refers to the essential scientific principles, pathologies, diseases and conditions that serve as the foundation for understanding integumentary system involvement in the treatment of patients/clients across the lifespan.

- Anatomy, physiology, and pathophysiology of the integumentary system
- Diseases/conditions of the integumentary system
- Diseases or conditions of the integumentary system in order to provide effective treatments
- Medical management of the integumentary system (e.g., medical tests, medications, surgical procedures)
- Physiological response to environmental factors and characteristics (e.g., air temperature, humidity, water temperature, water depth, buoyancy, altitude)
- Effects of activity and exercise on the integumentary system

Data Collection: This category refers to awareness of the types and applications of integumentary system tests and measures. The category also includes the reaction of the integumentary system to tests and measures. Information covered in these areas supports appropriate and effective patient/client management across the lifespan.

- Appropriate types of integumentary system tests/measures and their applications (e.g., measuring wound characteristics)
- Physiological response of the integumentary system to various types of tests/measures
- Movement analysis as related to the integumentary system (e.g., friction, shear, pressure, and scar)

Interventions: This category refers to the features (e.g., types, applications, responses, and potential complications) of integumentary system interventions as well as the impact on the integumentary system of interventions performed on other systems in order to support patient/client management across the lifespan.

- Appropriate types of integumentary system interventions and their applications
- Physiological response of the integumentary system to various types of interventions
- Secondary effects or complications from interventions on integumentary system
- Secondary effects or complications on integumentary system from interventions used on other systems
- Wound management techniques (e.g., nonselective debridement, dressings, topical agents)

Metabolic & Endocrine Systems

Clinical Application of Physical Therapy Principles and Foundational Sciences: This category refers to the essential scientific principles, pathologies, diseases and conditions that serve as the foundation for understanding metabolic and endocrine systems' involvement in the treatment of patients/clients across the lifespan.

- Anatomy of the endocrine system
- Physiology and pathophysiology of the metabolic and endocrine systems
- Diseases/conditions of the metabolic and endocrine systems
- Diseases or conditions of the metabolic and endocrine systems in order to provide effective treatments
- Physiological response to environmental factors and characteristics (e.g., air temperature, humidity, water temperature, water depth, buoyancy, altitude)
- Effects of activity and exercise on the metabolic and endocrine systems

Data Collection: This category refers to awareness of the types and applications of metabolic and endocrine tests and measures. The category also includes the reaction of the metabolic and endocrine systems to tests and measures. Information covered in these areas supports appropriate and effective patient/client management across the lifespan.

- Physiological response of the metabolic and endocrine systems to various types of tests/measures

Interventions: This category refers to the features (e.g., types, applications, responses, and potential complications) of metabolic and endocrine systems interventions as well as the impact on the metabolic and endocrine systems of interventions performed on other systems in order to support patient/client management across the lifespan.

- Physiological response of the metabolic and endocrine systems to various types of interventions
- Secondary effects or complications from interventions on metabolic and endocrine systems
- Secondary effects or complications on metabolic and endocrine systems from interventions used on other systems

Gastrointestinal System

Clinical Application of Physical Therapy Principles and Foundational Sciences: This category refers to the awareness of diseases or conditions that serve as the foundation for understanding gastrointestinal system involvement in the treatment of patients/clients across the lifespan.

- Diseases or conditions of the gastrointestinal system in order to provide effective treatments

Multi-System

Clinical Applications of Physical Therapy Principles and Foundational Sciences: This category refers to the essential scientific principles, pathologies, diseases and conditions that serve as the foundation for understanding multi-system involvement in the treatment of patients/clients across the lifespan.

- Normal interrelationships among multiple systems
- Impact of co-morbidities/co-existing conditions on patient/client treatment (e.g., diabetes and hypertension; obesity and arthritis; hip fracture and dementia)
- Diseases/conditions affecting multiple systems (e.g., cancer, pregnancy, morbid obesity)
- Diseases or conditions of multiple systems in order to provide effective treatments
- Medical management of multiple systems (e.g., medical tests, medications, surgical procedures)
- Physiological response to environmental factors and characteristics (e.g., air temperature, humidity, water temperature, water depth, buoyancy, altitude)

Equipment & Devices

This category refers to the different types of equipment and devices, use requirements and/or contextual determinants, as well as any other influencing factors involved in the application of equipment and devices in order to support patient/client treatment and management across the lifespan.

- Assistive and adaptive devices
- Prosthetic devices
- Orthotic devices
- Protective devices
- Supportive devices
- Gravity-assisted devices
- Bariatric equipment and devices

Therapeutic Modalities

This category refers to the underlying principles for the use of therapeutic modalities as well as the justification for the use of the variety of types of therapeutic modalities employed to support patient/client treatment and management across the lifespan.

- Indications, contraindications, and precautions of therapeutic modalities
- Physical agents (e.g., athermal agents, cryotherapy, hydrotherapy, light agents, sound agents, thermotherapy)
- Mechanical modalities (e.g., compression therapies, mechanical motion devices, traction devices)
- Electrotherapeutic delivery of medications (e.g., iontophoresis)
- Electrical stimulation (e.g., Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES), High Voltage Pulsed Current (HVPC), Neuromuscular Electrical Stimulation (NES), TENS)

Safety, Protection, & Professional Roles

This category refers to the critical issues involved in patient/client safety and protection and the responsibilities of healthcare providers to ensure that patient/client management and healthcare decisions take place in a secure and trustworthy environment.

- Factors influencing patient/client safety (e.g., fall risk, use of restraints, use of equipment, environmental factors)
- Emergency preparedness (e.g., CPR, first aid, disaster response)
- Proper body mechanics
- Injury prevention
- Infection control procedures (e.g., standard/universal precautions)
- Legal obligations for reporting abuse and neglect
- Patient/client rights (e.g., ADA, IDEA, HIPAA)
- Human resource legal issues (e.g., OSHA, sexual harassment)
- Standards of documentation
- Risk guidelines (e.g., documentation, policies and procedures, incident reports)
- Roles and responsibilities of PTA in relation to PT and other healthcare professionals
- Roles and responsibilities of other healthcare professionals and support staff

Teaching & Learning

This category refers to the principles and theories of teaching and learning required to create a learning environment in which information is effectively communicated to patients/clients to ensure that they receive appropriate instruction designed to support patient/client management decisions.

- Teaching and learning strategies, theories, and techniques (e.g., cognitive, motor)
- Communication skills (e.g., styles, verbal and noverbal modes)

Evidence-Based Practice

This category refers to the knowledge of basic research methodology and data collection techniques necessary for interpretation of information sources and practice research to support patient/client management fundamental to evidence-based practice.

- Outcome measures (e.g., suitability, applications)
- Data collection techniques (e.g., surveys, direct observation)
- Basic research concepts and interpretation (e.g., reliability, validity)